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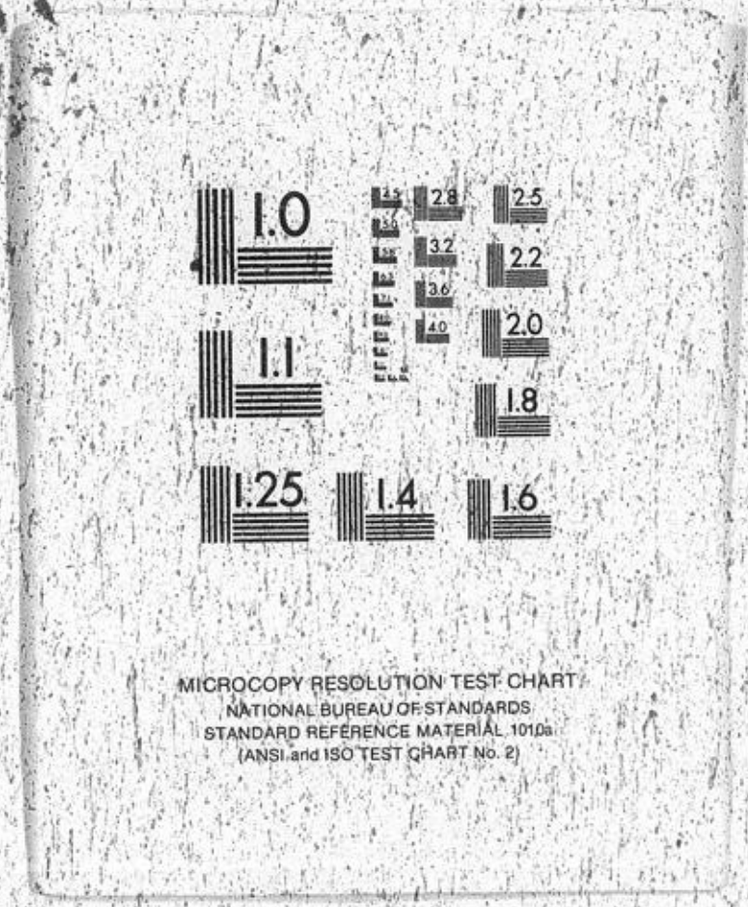

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INDEX HEADINGS

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1

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5b. Extract from Hansard, Vol 419 - HC 85 -

Note the references to Dominions in columns 672 and 676-7 of London Hansard (6)

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Extract from Hse of Lords. 19.2.46. Vol 419 (485-

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HOUSE OF LORDS

Tuesday, 19th February, 1946.

The House met at half-past two of the clock, The LORD CHANCELLOR on the Woolsack.

Prayers.

Lord Napier sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

CABINET MISSION TO INDIA.

2.35 p.m.

VISCOUNT SIMON: My Lords, may I, by private notice, ask the Secretary of State for India whether His Majesty's Government have any statement to make on Indian affairs?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE): My Lords, I thank the noble and learned Viscount for the opportunity he gives me of making a statement on behalf of His Majesty's Government. Your Lordships will recall that on the 19th September, 1945, on his return to India after discussions with His Majesty's Government, the Viceroy made a statement of policy, in the course of which he outlined the positive steps to be taken, immediately after the central and provincial elections to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realization of full self-government in India. Those steps include:—

(1) Preparatory discussions with the elected representatives of British India, and with the Indian States, in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution.

(2) The setting up of a constitution-making body: and

(3) The bringing into being of an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties.

The elections at the centre were held at the end of last year and in some of the provinces they are also over and responsible governments are in process of formation. In the other provinces polling dates are spread over the next few weeks. With the approach of the end of the electoral campaign His Majesty's Government have been considering the most fruitful method of giving effect to the programme to which I have referred.

In view of the paramount importance not only to India and to the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world of a successful outcome of the discussions with the leaders of Indian opinion His Majesty's Government have decided, with the approval of His Majesty the King, to send out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers consisting of the Secretary of State for India, the President of the Board of Trade, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter. This decision has the full concurrence of Lord Wavell.

I feel sure that your Lordships will give your support and goodwill to the Ministers and to the Viceroy in carrying out a task in which the future of 400 million people and crucial issues both for India and the world will be at stake.

I should add that during the absence of these Ministers the Prime Minister will himself assume responsibility for Admiralty business and the Lord President will be in charge of the Board of Trade. So far as the India and Burma Offices are concerned, my honourable friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will be in charge during my own absence, but he will be able to rely on the personal advice of the Prime Minister whenever it is required and he will refer important issues to him, particularly those affecting Burma, where the Governor will not, as will the Viceroy, be in personal touch with myself.

2.40 p.m.

VISCOUNT SIMON: My Lords, the Secretary of State has made a most important statement and has announced a highly novel procedure. We shall all join in the hope that this plan may bear fruit and that it may be regarded in India as a proof of the genuine desire of this country to help towards a solution of India's intractable constitutional problems. I ask leave to put to the noble Lord one or two questions about his statement, not by way of criticism—we shall need time to study the announcement—but for greater clarification. May

[Viscount Simon.]

I first ask whether I am right in understanding that the purpose of the visit of these three Cabinet Ministers is not to take part in framing a future Indian constitution, but to take part in the preliminary work of seeking agreement as to the method of setting up a constitution-making body? The distinction is all-important, as I am sure the Secretary of State will agree.

India has already been assured that it is for Indians to devise their new constitution and that, subject to certain necessary conditions, the British Parliament will then enact it; but the future constitution has to be framed by a constitution-making body composed of Indians. I take it that the new announcement is not to be read as going back on that promise, but that this Mission is going to India for the purpose of helping to bring together a body of representative Indians who will then be charged with the task of fixing their own constitution. Secondly, it is manifestly important to know what will be the extent of the authority of the three members of this Mission to speak for Britain. Sir Stafford Cripps went out with carefully framed instructions from the Cabinet, of which he was a member, and in all he did in India he carefully and loyally kept within those instructions.

What I think we should like to know from the noble Lord—I do not think it will embarrass him in the least; it is not meant to—is whether when these Ministers go out they will have plenary power to act for the Cabinet, or will they, as I should rather assume, report to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in London, which will still remain the responsible executive in the matter? Then again, and still more important, will any decisions that may be reached in the matter be subject to Parliamentary approval in the sense that Parliament will be given an opportunity to discuss them before any final decisions are taken?

There is one other point which must be in everybody's mind, so I venture to ask finally whether the Secretary of State will tell us how long these three Cabinet Ministers are expected to be out of the country engaged on this important mission. I quite appreciate that their Departments are going to be looked after by others while they are necessarily away, but still, important as this matter is, the absence, for example, of the President of the Board of Trade, in the light of domestic difficulties as to the distribution of supply, might become a matter of serious concern. Your Lordships will, I hope, think that these questions are reasonable. They are not intended in the least to be critical; they are asking for enlightenment. I would at the same time repeat that in the light of the decision which is now announced the Government may be assured of the good will and good wishes of those on these Benches in this bold effort to help to bring about a happier state of things in India.

2.47 p.m.

VISCOUNT SAMUEL: My Lords, I am sure the House will welcome the announcement of this fresh effort to break the persistent deadlock which has so long prevailed in India. In earlier days we on these Benches felt compelled to exercise our right of criticism of the course which had been pursued in several particulars by the Government here at home in relation to Indian affairs, but the difficulties that have arisen in recent months, and ever since what has been known as the Cripps offer, cannot in any degree in my opinion be attributed to the course adopted by the previous Government or by the present Government; they arise from conditions in India. I hope that the strong initiative that is now being taken by His Majesty's Government will elicit some helpful response from the contending interests in India. The present Viceroy commands a very general measure of confidence both in India and in this country. We may hope that he will find his hands strengthened by the delegation from the Cabinet which is about to go to India and that the objects which he has long had in view will be forwarded by their assistance.

I would mention only one specific point arising out of the Government statement. One of the three purposes which were announced last September as being pursued by His Majesty's Government was to secure that the Viceroy's Executive Council should be transformed into a fully representative body. That is one of the objects of this new Mission, but from the statement that was made then, and which has been made to-day, it is quite clear—and I hope it will be appreciated by the Indian political bodies—that any such transformation of the Viceroy's

Council now does not prejudice in any degree the preparation of the ultimate constitution of India, and will not prejudge at all any conclusions which may be reached by the constitution-making body. For the sake of preventing any misunderstanding by Indian public opinion I think it should be emphasised that these new arrangements which are being sought in the Viceroy's Executive Council are transitional and provisional and are open, of course, to full review by the constitution-making body when it is brought into being.

The noble and learned Viscount who has just spoken has mentioned that the absence of the President of the Board of Trade may give rise to considerable difficulties here. In his hands is a very large part of the whole work of post-war reconstruction in this country, and the functions he is performing in relation to industry and to foreign trade are of urgent and fundamental importance; yet Sir Stafford Cripps, the President of the Board of Trade, has rendered such signal services in India and is so fully acquainted with all the necessities of the case that it is clear that if three Cabinet Ministers are to go to India he should properly be one. I hope the Indian people will appreciate that the British public, in giving him leave of absence, are accepting a very considerable sacrifice of their own immediate interests.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I would ask your leave to put just one question, arising out of his statement, to the Secretary of State. That question is whether, when he replies to my noble and learned friend, Viscount Simon, he will make quite clear the precise relation which these Cabinet Ministers will have to the Viceroy? Will they be purely advisory or will they be, so to speak, colleagues of the Viceroy? Or will they represent the authority of His Majesty's Government—that is to say, all the authority of the Cabinet? I do not wish to make an argumentative speech, for I do not think that it would be very much in place at this moment. I have put my question merely for the purpose of eliciting clearly what the statement of the Secretary of State amounts to.

2.52 p.m.

THE EARL OF MUNSTER: My Lords, before the Secretary of State replies, perhaps I might address one or two questions to him. There are one or two points which, as a member of the Parliamentary Delegation to India, which has lately returned to this country, I think it behoves me to mention and I hope the noble Lord will be able to give me some reply upon them. The first thing I desire to ask is this. While I re-echo every word that the noble and learned Viscount Lord Simon has said, I would like to inquire further whether the Viceroy will remain as His Majesty's representative in India, in spite of the fact that three Cabinet Ministers are proceeding there from this country, including the Secretary of State for India. The second point upon which I would like to ask for information is whether, in view of the strategic importance that India holds, and must hold now and in the future, the decision of His Majesty's Government has been communicated to the Dominions chiefly concerned—to Australia, to South Africa, to New Zealand.

In this connexion, I would ask further whether any decision at which these three Ministers may arrive will be communicated—with a view to obtaining their views—to the Dominions concerned. Thirdly, may I ask the noble Lord this. I understand that one of the steps which is contemplated is to bring into being an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian political parties. That is somewhat different from the proposal which was made by the noble Viscount Lord Samuel. It will not be a representative body, as I understand it, but a body which has the sole and whole support of the chief Indian political parties. I should like to have that point made clear before the delegation departs on its journey. May I add that I feel sure that the whole House will wish it: "God speed and good luck."

2.54 p.m.

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE: My Lords, I should like to thank your Lordships for the exceedingly friendly spirit in which, on all sides, the announcement which I have had the honour to make has been received, and I will do my best to be lucid and frank with your Lordships in answering all the questions that have been put to me. The noble and learned Viscount Lord Simon asked me four questions. First he asked was it clear that this Mission of the Cabinet was

[Lord Pethick-Lawrence.]

not going out to frame a constitution for India but was merely going out with the intention of setting up a constitution-making body.

VISCOUNT SIMON: To assist in setting up such a body.

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE: To assist in the setting up of a constitution-making body. That is the answer, of course. This announcement that I have made to-day does not alter in any way the statement that was made by the Viceroy on his return to India in September. The only change is—and I will come to the question by the noble Marquess later on—that the Viceroy's hands will be strengthened by the presence with him of members of His Majesty's Government. As the noble and learned Viscount correctly said, it is for Indians to decide the basis of their own constitutional structure. That has been the avowed intention of, I think, all Parties in this House for a considerable number of years, and that remains the intention of His Majesty's Government at the present time.

Then the noble and learned Viscount asked me—and I will take his fourth question next—how long it was proposed that the Mission should stay in India. He rightly stressed the importance to this country of having the authorized heads of the Ministries concerned present in this country; and I would emphasize the point that, I think, he made, that it is an indication of the extreme importance which His Majesty's Government attach to a successful solution of the problems of India that His Majesty's Government have made this proposal. I, of course, appreciate that it is desirable that members of the Mission should not stay longer in India than is vitally necessary. At the same time, I am sure that your Lordships would not have any desire that the Mission should return with its work only half done, that is, not having laid a firm foundation but having laid one which might afterwards prove insufficient to carry the vast consequences which are necessary.

Beyond that, it is not very easy for me to go at the present time. I do not think that I can be very specific as to the length of time we shall stay. Your Lordships may be assured that we shall not stay longer than we consider absolutely necessary. But we shall certainly stay as long as we find necessary in order to bring about the objects of our visit. That, as I say, was the fourth question which the noble and learned Viscount asked. He further asked me what was the position of the Mission in relation to the Cabinet. This Mission is a representation of the Cabinet in India. It will carry with it in India the authority of the Cabinet, subject to what I am going to say just now.

Of course we have already had, and shall continue to have before we leave for India, very careful discussions with the whole Cabinet, and, no doubt, when we go we shall be given certain specific instructions on the direction and general purposes of our procedure. Within these instructions we shall, of course, have power to take such decisions as may be necessary at the time, and we shall be able to have contact with His Majesty's Government at home. On major issues that do not fall within the instructions already given to us, we shall, no doubt, wish to consult with our colleagues in this country. I think that that answers as fully as I am able the questions put by the noble Viscount.

Then he asked me a further question on how far we would be in a position to commit Parliament. I am not saying anything which arises out of this special Mission. To the best of my knowledge and belief I am interpreting what is the constitution of this country. Neither a part of the Cabinet nor the Cabinet itself can commit Parliament to certain actions as far as I am aware, and it must be perfectly evident that any fundamental alteration in the relationship between this country and India will have at some stage or other to come before Parliament. I imagine, in fact I think it was stated in the Cripps Declaration, that in some matters there will be a definite treaty between this country and India. Quite clearly, in some shape or form that must be brought before Parliament.

3.1 p.m.

VISCOUNT SIMON: My Lords, I am most grateful to the noble Lord for answering fully and candidly, and I thank him. The question I put, which I agree is sometimes a difficult one to answer, was this: Will Parliament be given the opportunity to discuss this

before any official decision is reached? I am perfectly aware that Parliamentary authority is needed before a great change can be effected, but it is one thing to discuss it after it has been agreed and it is quite a different thing to discuss it before any Parliamentary decision has been reached.

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE: I would remind the noble Viscount that under the conditions of the Cripps Declaration a perfectly definite promise was made and we go to India with that as a background. The Cabinet has always the right to take certain decisions and to undertake in certain contingencies to present its proposals to Parliament. I do not think His Majesty's Government in what they are proposing, are going in any way out of the normal constitutional procedure. If necessary, that can be dealt with later, but that is as far as I should like to commit myself at the moment, although I think it meets the point which the noble and learned Viscount was making. I should now like to deal with a point raised by the noble Marquess, and which was also referred to by the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel. They both wanted to be assured that we were not overriding, or going to override, the Viceroy, but that we were going with him to attempt to obtain a settlement of this problem. I can certainly give them the assurance that it is our intention to be associated with the Viceroy and for the Viceroy to be associated with us—as I have already said, with his full concurrence—in trying to reach a solution. Our presence in India will not alter the substantive relationship between the Cabinet and the Viceroy which remains in precisely the same form as it is at the present time. I have no doubt that we shall pursue such conversations, in mutual agreement between ourselves and the Viceroy, that we may arrive at the best solution.

Perhaps I may answer the question of the noble Earl, Lord Munster, which he put to me at the same time. I speak on the spur of the moment, and subject to a review of the strict legal constitutional position, but I think the noble Earl is quite right in saying that the Viceroy does remain as His Majesty's representative in India, and the fact that the Secretary of State is in India does not alter that fundamental fact. Naturally, before giving a final and categoric answer, I should like to verify my view in the matter. The noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, also asked me whether the reference in the earlier part of my statement to the formation and the nature of the Viceroy's Executive Council in any way prejudged the nature of the ultimate constitutional machinery. The answer to that is, of course, No. In fact, this part of my announcement was really a recital in an abridged form of the statement that was made in September last by the Viceroy himself, and there is obviously no intention conveyed in it that we are prejudging the final constitutional machinery which, as the noble Viscount, Lord Samuel, has already pointed out, is, and must be, and should be, the work of India itself.

That only leaves, I think, the two other questions which were put to me by the noble Earl, Lord Munster. He asked me whether the Dominions had been informed. My noble friend, Viscount Addison, assures me that that is the case. The other question was, as I understood it, what precisely was to be the nature of the Executive Council which is referred to in the announcement. I should not like to be too specific with regard to that. It is hoped to base the Viceroy's Executive, during the period while the constitution-making body is proceeding with its labours, on the main Indian Parties. It cannot be representative in the sense that it will rest on precisely some representative body, because there is no precise body of which it is representative. I cannot say the precise way in which the transformation that it is hoped may be expected will take place, and I must leave it in the somewhat vague terms which were used in September last and which have been abridged in the recital of the statement. I think that answers all the questions which were put to me.

3.8 p.m.

THE EARL OF MUNSTER: My Lords, may I worry the noble Lord with one further question? When this Committee of Ministers who go out to India arrive at a decision will they communicate it to the Dominion Governments before any public announcement is made in this country? I attach very great importance to that.

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE: That is a question which is a matter more for the Cabinet, but I have no doubt that it will be the business of my noble friend,

[Lord Pethick-Lawrence.]

the Secretary of State for the Dominions, to keep the Dominions informed, and if he thinks it desirable, to inform them beforehand. But I should not like to pledge myself on that.

3.9 p.m.

LORD RANKEILLOUR: My Lords, may we take it that this announcement implies no abrogation of what is known as the Cripps Declaration, the President of the Board of Trade's own Declaration, with regard to the relation with the Indian States and the protection of minorities?

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE: In my announcement to-day I repeated the point about the Indian States, in the recital:

"Preparatory discussions with the elected representatives of British India, and with the Indian States, in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the methods of framing a constitution."

Therefore, so far as that is concerned, this is merely the repetition of what was said in September, and bears out what was also said in a slightly different form in what are known as the Cripps' proposals.

LORD RANKEILLOUR: I do not think there has been any repetition of the statement with regard to the protection of minorities.

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE: I think that is another point. I do not fully understand the noble Lord's question. I have answered so many questions that perhaps it is not necessary to go any further, because it is not always easy to follow the gist of questions put orally, but I have done my best to meet those which have been put.

SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENTS ACT, 1932:

BOROUGH OF ILFORD ORDER.

LORD WALKDEN: My Lords, I beg to move that the Order standing on the Paper be approved.

Moved, That the Order made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Sunday Entertainments Act, 1932, for extending Section 1 of that Act to the Borough of Ilford, and laid before this House of Thursday last, be approved.—(*Lord Walkden.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

STOKE ON-TRENT GAS ORDER, 1946.

MARCH GAS ORDER, 1946.

LORD WALKDEN: My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend, Lord Ammon, I beg to move the Motion standing on the Paper in his name.

Moved, That the Special Orders, as reported from the Special Orders Committee on Thursday last, be approved.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION REGULATIONS, 1946.

LORD WALKDEN: My Lords, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name.

Moved, That the Special Order, as reported from the Special Orders Committee on Thursday last, be approved.—(*Lord Walkden.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

ASSURANCE COMPANIES BILL.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

3.41 p.m.

LORD PAKENHAM: My Lords, I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. I will ask your Lordships' permission to move rather rapidly across this subject, because, if ever a Bill was an agreed Bill, this Bill falls under that heading. It is a Bill that has been agreed upon between all the political Parties, or shall I say, all the main political Parties. It has been agreed with the insurance companies. It passed through another place with only the smallest Amendments. In fact everyone is already agreed upon it except your Lordships, and I hope you will agree upon its principles in a very few minutes.

Its main object is to underline the stability and security of the British insurance market which is second to none in the world, and it is my privilege, before coming to the Bill, to repeat what the President of the Board of Trade said in another place, that the Government have no intention of interfering with the transaction of insurance business by private enterprise save to the limited extent to which insurance at home may be affected by the existing proposals relating to personal social insurance and industrial injury. I feel it is as well to make that

Extract from Hse of Commons 19.2.46. V.C 419 - No. 85

[Mr. Morrison.]

Ministry of Works, I think it is all right. There are certain questions which I think it best I should take myself. I certainly thought this one, on which I was going to put my head on the block, ought to be taken by myself.

Captain Crookshank: It may be all right but it has not been all right today.

Mr. Godfrey Nicholson: Must not the Ministry of Information be very innocent with regard to a question without any political allusions in it?

Mr. H. Morrison: It is a fortunate thing that we are all innocent from time to time.

CANADIAN SECRET INFORMATION (LEAKAGE)

Mr. Eden (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister whether he has been in communication with the Prime Minister of Canada regarding the reported leakage of information of a secret character, and whether he has any statement to make.

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir, but as the matter is in the hands of the Canadian Government and as it is *sub judice* I do not think it proper to say anything more about it.

Mr. Gallacher: In view of the sensationalism we are getting about international spy rings, will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to publish the amount of money spent by this country in the international spy racket?

MALAYA (PLANTERS' WIVES)

76. **Major Sir Basil Neven-Spence** asked the Secretary of State for War if he will take immediate steps to allow the wives of planters to rejoin their husbands in Malaya.

Mr. Bellenger: The Military Administration in Malaya is anxious that wives of planters should return to Malaya at the earliest possible date. The food and accommodation situation is such, however, that general permission for wives to return cannot yet be given. Priority must be given to the return of commercial undertakings. I am advised that if in individual cases a husband can satisfy the Military Administration that accommodation for his wife is available and that rations from official stocks will not be demanded, there would be no difficulty in obtaining their agreement to the issue of a permit for the return of the wife.

Mr. Gammans: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that many of these planters were interned in Malaya during the whole time of the Japanese occupation, and have been separated from their wives for many years? Will he consider doing his best to give them as much priority as is possible?

Mr. Bellenger: We have every sympathy with these unfortunate people.

INDIA (CABINET MINISTERS' MISSION)

The Prime Minister: The House will recall that on 19th September, 1945, on his return to India after discussions with His Majesty's Government, the Viceroy made a statement of policy, in the course of which he outlined the positive steps to be taken, immediately after the central and provincial elections to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realisation of full self-government in India. Those steps include:

(1) Preparatory discussions with the elected representatives of British India, and with the Indian States, in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution;

(2) The setting up of a constitution-making body; and

(3) The bringing into being of an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties.

The elections at the centre were held at the end of last year, and in some of the provinces they are also over and responsible governments are in process of formation. In the other provinces polling dates are spread over the next few weeks. With the approach of the end of the electoral campaign His Majesty's Government have been considering the most fruitful method of giving effect to the programme to which I have referred.

In view of the paramount importance not only to India and to the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world

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Silver Coinage

57. **Mr. McKie** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware of the inconvenience being caused to the public by the shortage of 1s. pieces and the abundance of 2s. 6d. pieces; and if he will make a statement thereon.

Mr. Dalton: No, Sir. The Mint issues what the banks order. Last year they issued more than 29,500,000 shillings and close on 20,000,000 half-crowns.

American Visitors' Earnings (Dollar Currency)

58. **Mr. Austin** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will carefully examine the question of the conversion into dollar currency of the earnings in sterling of entertainers here on flying visits from U.S.A., with a view to such currency being used to better advantage in the national interest.

Mr. Dalton: Such earnings are now freely convertible into dollars, and I am not prepared to vary this arrangement at present.

Mr. Austin: While thanking my right hon. Friend for his reply, may I ask him to bear in mind that widespread resentment is felt in this country at the proposed expenditure of £10,000 on a certain crooner who, it is anticipated, will visit this country in the near future?

Mr. Dalton: I expect the person in question hopes to make something by coming here and, therefore, no doubt, is appreciated by some, though not by others. One can always turn him off.

War Damage Finance

59. **Mr. Gammans** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in view of the representations made to him by deputations from Norwich City Council, Coventry City Council and other badly bombed towns that their reconstruction plans are being hampered by the difficulty arising from the conversion of a cost-of-works payment into a value payment where a trader is not allowed, on planning grounds, to rebuild on his old site, he is taking steps to resume the conversion of the value payment into a cost-of-works payment in such cases; and if the whole question of the inadequacy of value payments is being reconsidered having regard to their generally discouraging effect on rebuilding.

Mr. Dalton: I have carefully considered this matter, but it is difficult to justify better treatment, in this particular respect, for the owner of a damaged property than for the owner of an undamaged property in a reconstruction area. And such would be the result of this proposal.

Mr. Gammans: Does not the Chancellor realise that this anomaly and injustice is doing a tremendous amount to hold up the very replanning that he and the whole country desire?

MINISTER'S SPEECH, PRESS DISTRIBUTION

66. **Mr. Raikes** asked the Minister of Information why the recent speech delivered by the Lord President of the Council at Peckham was distributed by his Department to the Press on 11th February, 1946.

Mr. H. Morrison: Late in the afternoon of 11th February the Ministry of Information were asked by a number of journalists whether they could get for them advance copies of this speech, which was to be given the same evening. It was only when the text of this speech was received at the Ministry that the officer in charge realised that it contained pas ges of a party political character. He decided that the Press would prefer to receive it informally through him rather than encounter the delay which would result if he returned it. He therefore had a few copies made for the Press representatives who were waiting. No general distribution of the speech was made by the Ministry of Information. I regret, however, that departmental facilities were used in this way, and steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence.

Captain Crookshank: May I ask what exactly is the practice of dealing with Ministry of Information questions? The Parliamentary Secretary replies to some, the Lord President to others and sometimes neither of them appear. It is very confusing to those of my hon. Friends who want to conduct a cross examination?

Mr. H. Morrison: As the right hon. and gallant Gentleman knows, the Minister of Information is away and these questions are distributed and divided according to their nature between myself and my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the

11

of a successful outcome of the discussions with the leaders of Indian opinion, His Majesty's Government have decided to send out to India a special mission composed of Cabinet Ministers to seek in association with the Viceroy an agreement with these leaders on the principles and procedure relating to the constitutional issue.

Accordingly, with the approval of His Majesty The King, His Majesty's Government have decided that the Secretary of State for India, the President of the Board of Trade and the First Lord of the Admiralty shall proceed to India for this purpose towards the end of March. This course has the full concurrence of the Viceroy.

I feel sure that the House will give its support and goodwill to the Ministers and to the Viceroy in these discussions, in which the future of 400 million people and crucial issues both for India and the world will be at stake.

I should add that during the absence of these Ministers, I shall myself assume responsibility for Admiralty business and the Lord President of the Council will be in charge of the Board of Trade. So far as the India and Burma Offices are concerned, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will be in charge during the Secretary of State's absence. But he will be able to rely on my personal advice whenever it is required, and he will refer important issues to myself, particularly those affecting Burma, where the Governor will not, like the Viceroy, be in personal touch with the Secretary of State.

Mr. Eden: May I ask the Prime Minister one or two questions arising out of this very important statement? In the first place, while it is clear, I presume, that the Secretary of State for India will carry with him in his person the authority of Secretary of State, can we also be assured that, in respect of all matters that would normally require Cabinet decisions, there will be reference to Cabinet authority in London—that is to say, that these three Ministers will not carry with them anything in the nature of Cabinet authority? Secondly, may I ask the Prime Minister whether Parliament will have an opportunity of discussing any developments of policy that may arise out of this visit? Thirdly, although it is hard to say at present, that it may be that we should like an opportunity to discuss India before the Ministers leave, and if so, will there be an opportunity? Finally, and most important of all, may I ask the Prime Minister to make it clear that the main lines of British policy in respect of India still stand—that is to say that it is the responsibility of Indians, and not of Ministers from this country, to bring about a constitution-making body?

The Prime Minister: In reply to the first point, it is clear that it is no use sending out responsible Ministers, unless they have a degree of responsibility to act, and clearly, therefore, within the terms laid down by Cabinet decisions, these Ministers must be able to act. Of course, on major matters of policy they will refer back for Cabinet decision, but if they are going to negotiate they must have power to negotiate, as would the Viceroy, if he were acting on behalf of the Government. On the second point, with regard to the matter coming before the House, clearly anything arising out of these discussions will be the subject of legislation and will have to come before the House. On the third point, concerning Debate, I am not sure whether it is advisable to have a Debate before they go out, but, in any case, there is a Bill coming down to this House which is designed to give the Viceroy more elbow room in the formation of his Cabinet, on which discussion could arise. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would discuss with the Lord President of the Council whether that is an adequate opportunity or not? Undoubtedly, it is our intention to speed up machinery in agreement with the Indians, whereby the Indian people themselves will decide their destiny.

Mr. Sorensen: May I ask whether there is any time limit placed on this Mission, which will take with it the best wishes of the House in the attempt to solve this problem?

The Prime Minister: There is, of course, no time limit laid down. One hopes that they will not be kept out there too long. I echo the hon. Member's hope—there is no harm in hoping—that they will be successful in as short a time as possible.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS BILL

Lords Amendments to be considered upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 78.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Proceedings on Government Business exempted, at this day's Sitting, from the provisions of the Standing Order (Sittings of the House).—[*The Prime Minister.*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NATIONAL INSURANCE (INDUSTRIAL INJURIES) BILL

As amended (in the Standing Committee and on re-committal) further considered.

CLAUSE 29.—(*Adjustments for successive accidents.*)

3.20 p.m.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of National Insurance (Mr. Lindgren): I beg to move, in page 20, line 22, leave out from "exceeding," to "twenty-two," in line 25 and insert:

"(i) if the beneficiary is over the age of eighteen or is for the time being entitled to an increase of benefit in respect of a child or adult dependent, forty-five shillings;

(ii) if the beneficiary is between the ages of seventeen and eighteen and not for the time being entitled as aforesaid, thirty-three shillings and ninepence;

(iii) if the beneficiary is under the age of seventeen and not for the time being entitled as aforesaid."

This Amendment is consequential on the new Clauses which were included in the Bill yesterday to provide for the 17-18 age group.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Lindgren: I beg to move, in page 20, line 26, at end, insert:

"(*b*) the provision of this Act excluding the right to injury benefit for the first three days of incapacity resulting from the relevant accident unless there are twelve such days during the injury benefit period shall, in relation to two or more accidents happening at intervals not greater than thirteen weeks as the result of each of which he is incapable of work on some day during its injury benefit period, apply so as to permit of there being taken into account, for the purpose of making up the said twelve days in the case of each of those accidents, any days which may be so taken into account in the case of any other of them."

This gives some relief in regard to waiting days in cases where two or more successive accidents are covered by the Bill, each of which causes incapacity and is suffered by the same person at successive intervals of not more than 13 weeks. In such circumstances, the days of incapacity from each accident, count towards the total 12 days' qualifying period.

Amendment agreed to.

CLAUSE 30.—(*Overlapping benefits.*)

Mr. Lindgren: I beg to move, in page 21, line 29, leave out from "death," to "in," in line 30, and insert:

"by way of a pension, or by way of an allowance payable to her as having the care of a child."

This Amendment is a drafting Amendment, and is consequential upon Amendments which were agreed to by the House yesterday, in connection with the death benefit Clauses.

Amendment agreed to.

CLAUSE 31.—(*Adjustment of arrears of benefit in respect of out-door relief, etc.*)

Amendment made: In page 21, line 41, leave out "disablement."—[*Mr. Lindgren.*]

CLAUSE 32.—(*Disqualifications, forfeitures and susp*

The following Amendm
the Order Paper:

In page 22, line 25, le
any person who fails," ar
"for the forfeiture of inju
claimant or beneficiary for fa

In line 27, leave out
"of" to end of line 2
"the relevant injury,

James Griffiths.]

Mr. Lindgren: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, may we consider together the two Amendments, which are both drafting Amendments, consequential upon what was done in the House yesterday.

The Solicitor-General (Major Sir Frank Soskice): I beg to move, in page 22, line 25, leave out "that any person who fails," and insert:

"for the forfeiture of injury benefit by a claimant or beneficiary for failure."

This Amendment is a drafting Amendment and is proposed for the following reason: In Committee, attention was called to the fact that Clause 32 (2) of the Bill, for some reason, used first the expression "right to any injury benefit,"

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13

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

13

WARNING: (Any telegraphic retransmission of this secret cypher telegram must be prepared in a one-time system)

CYPHER (PUBLEX)

FROM: D.O.

TO: CANADA (GOVT.)
AUSTRALIA "
NEW ZEALAND "
SOUTH AFRICA "

Sent 4.30 p.m., 17th Feb., 1946.

D No. 136 TOP SECRET and PERSONAL

My telegram of 17th September D No. 1751.

Following for Prime Minister. Begins.

Following announcement is to be made in House of Commons on Tuesday 19th February. Begins.

The House will recall that on the 19th September 1945 on his return to India after discussions with His Majesty's Government, the Viceroy made a statement of policy, in the course of which he outlined the positive steps to be taken, immediately after the central and provincial elections to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realisation of full self-government in India. Those steps include:-

(1) Preparatory discussions with the elected representatives of British India, and with the Indian States, in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution;

(2) The setting up of a constitution-making body: and

(3) The bringing into being of an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties.

The elections at the centre were held at the end of last year and in some of the provinces they are also over and responsible governments are in process of formation. In the other provinces polling dates are spread over the next few weeks. With the approach of the end of the electoral campaign His Majesty's Government have been considering the most fruitful method of giving effect to the programme to which I have referred.

In view of the paramount importance not only to India and to the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world of a successful outcome of the discussions with the leaders of Indian opinion His Majesty's Government have decided, with the approval of His Majesty the King, to send out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers consisting of the Secretary of State for India, the President of the Board of Trade, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter. This decision has the full concurrence of Lord Wavell.

I feel sure that the House will give its support and goodwill to the Ministers and to the Viceroy in carrying out a task in which the future of 400 million people and crucial issues both for India and the world will be at stake. Ends.

Copy to:- India Office Mr. J.P. Gibson

[2642. Wt. 49952 327 10m. 2/46 C.N.Ld. 46

Draft 17/2/46

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D. O.

Mr.
Mr.
Mr.
Mr. Clutterbuck.
Mr. C. W. Dixon. 16th Feb. at once
Depy. U.S. of S.
Permt. U.S. of S.
Parly. U.S. of S.
Secretary of State.

Published 4.30 pm 17/2

[To go on Sunday, 17th Feb]

DRAFT.

Publex telegram

PUBLEX

External Ottawa
External Canberra
External Wellington
Pretoria Capetown

D. No. 136 Tel.

Secret and Personal.

My telegram of 17th September D No. 1731. Following for Prime Minister. Begins.

Following announcement to be made in House of Commons on Tuesday 19th February.

The House will resume ... at 2.30 p.m.

Further action.

Copy to Mr. Gibson (I.O.) Ward
copies. Tel. Secret and Personal

No other copying or distribution.

Please return to me.

17 FEB 1946
12 Dec

17 FEB 1946
14

Printing.

TOP SECRET

15

15

ANNEXURE

To be made by the P.M. in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 20th

DRAFT ANNOUNCEMENT

The House will recall that on the 19th September 1945 on his return to India after discussions with H.M.G., the Viceroy made a statement of policy, in the course of which he outlined the positive steps to be taken, immediately after the central and provincial elections to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realisation of full self-government in India. Those steps include:-

(1) Preparatory discussions with the elected representatives of British India, and with the Indian States, in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution;

(2) The setting up of a constitution-making body; and

(3) The bringing into being of an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties.

The elections at the centre were held at the end of last year and in some of the provinces they are also over and responsible governments are in process of formation. In the other provinces polling dates are spread over the next few weeks. With the approach of the end of the electoral campaign H.M.G. have been considering the most fruitful method of giving effect to the programme to which I have referred.

In view of the paramount importance not only to India and to the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world of a successful outcome of the discussions with the

leaders of Indian opinion H.M.G. have decided, with the approval of His Majesty the King, to send out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers consisting of the Secretary of State for India, the President of the Board of Trade, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter. This decision has the full concurrence of Lord Wavell.

I feel sure that the House will give its support and goodwill to the Ministers and to the Viceroy in carrying out a task in which the future of 400 million people and crucial issues both for India and the world will be at stake.

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

17

INFN. DEPT.
326

17

Information Department.

CYPHER TELEGRAM (O.T.P.)

From Secretary of State for India.

To H.M.Ambassador, Washington.

Desp: 19.40 hours, 6th February 1946.

IMMEDIATE.
2928. TOP SECRET & PERSONAL.

Fuckle from Joyce. My immediately preceding telegram. Following are points of guidance:-

1) This step is evidence of H.M.G.'s sincerity and sense of urgency in securing successful outcome of discussions. It represents anxiety of Parliament and people of Britain to see just and honourable settlement in India.

2) It is no new departure in policy but is in fulfilment of H.M.G's intentions expressed in Viceroy's statement of September 19th.

3) Ministers and Viceroy will hold discussions with representatives of the Provincial Legislatives and of Indian States but they will also have conversations ~~also~~ with accredited leaders of the main parties and communities.

4) The presence at the discussions of Senior Members of the Cabinet fully apprised of the Cabinet's views will naturally lend authority to the proceedings and enable decisions affecting H.M.G. to be expedited, but the Ministers will refer major issues to the Cabinet if necessary. Parliamentary legislation would of course be required to implement any new constitution for India, and the terms of a Treaty between India and the U.K. would have to be available in connection with such legislation.

5) H.M.G. regard themselves and Parliament as committed to the undertaking given by the Coalition Government in 1942 to implement the recommendations of a constitution-making body set up with concurrence and participation of the main parties subject to the conditions specified in clause (b) of the 1942 Draft Declaration.

6) In any alternative procedure which may be suggested H.M.G., while bearing in mind their responsibility to Parliament, would be entitled to give assurances that they will commend to Parliament the outcome of a particular procedure for framing a constitution.

7) The purpose of the discussions is to seek the

/widest

widest possible measure of agreement on the procedure whereby Indians can arrive at a constitutional settlement, but H.M.G. do not contemplate that the setting up of a constitution-making body should necessarily be contingent on complete general agreement.

8) Discussions will take place with representatives of the Indian States as to their participation in the constitution-making body, but the States will remain free to decide whether or not to adhere to any new arrangement which may be made in respect of British India.

9) It cannot be said how long the Ministers' visit to India will last. They will clearly have to stay there some weeks, but duties at home would not permit an unduly prolonged absence.

Copy to Sir D.Monteath.
Mr Patrick.
Mr Turnbull.
Mr Gibson.
Sir G.Laithwaite.

OUTWARD TELEGRAM

19

END

INFN. DEPT. 326

19 End

Information Department.

CYPHER TELEGRAM (O.T.P.).

From Secretary of State for India.

To H.M.Ambassador, Washington.

Desp. 18.30 hours, 9th February 1946.

IMMEDIATE.
2921. TOP SECRET & PERSONAL.

Fuckle from Joyce. An announcement somewhat on following lines will be made by Prime Minister in House of Commons on or about Thursday February 15th. Text as finally approved will be telegraphed officially as soon as possible together with date and time of release. Gist of announcement is:-

1. Recapitulation of steps to be taken immediately after the elections outlined by Viceroy on September 19th 1945.

2. Indication that with approaching end of election period H.M.G. have given careful consideration as to the best method of implementing the programme.

3. Decision by H.M.G., in view of paramount importance of discussions to India and to peace of the world, to associate with Viceroy a special mission of British Cabinet to facilitate settlement on principles and procedure relating to constitutional issue. Three senior Cabinet Ministers including Secretary of State are to leave for India towards end of March.

Announcement will almost certainly be followed by important supplementary questions answers to which will be telegraphed to you textually. My immediately succeeding telegram contains points we propose to use for publicity purposes here and may also serve as basis of guidance to you. Please telegraph if you require further information.

Copy to Sir D.Monteath.
Mr Patrick.
Mr Turnbull.
Mr Gibson.
Sir G.Laithwaite.

END